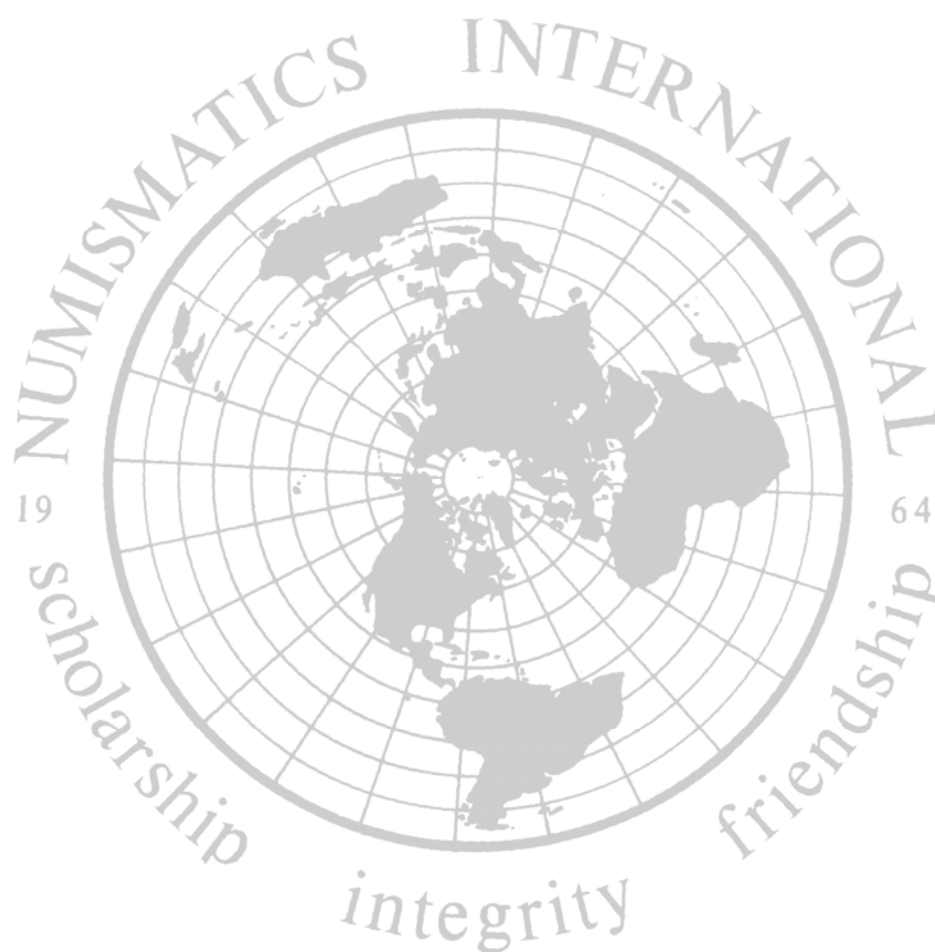


# NI Bulletin

A Publication of Numismatics International Inc.

Volume 40 No. 11



November 2005

\$2.00

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## From the Editor' Desk

I have been fortunate to communicate with a few of you and look forward to getting to know the membership better. It has now been three months since I began this job. I am still learning, and your patience is appreciated. As you will see in this edition, the numismatic community has been gracious to provide us with images, and we are grateful for this as it enhances the presentation of the articles. My thanks to those of you who helped with this month's Bulletin, especially the article contributors. I hope you enjoy their submissions.

Herman Blanton

ISSN: 0197-3088

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## Letter to the Editor

I enjoyed "A Numismatic History of Ancient Poland: Era of Mieszko I 960-992" by Henry Schab (September Bulletin). However, I offer the following observations. The article has illustrations of two denars issued by Mieszko I. The author indicates that both denars were struck at Poznan in the years A.D. 963-965. While most references still tentatively attribute these coins to Poznan, they date the issuance of these denars to the latter part of Mieszko's reign, the period A.D. 980-992.

Some scholarship even attributes these denars to a much later date and different reign. For instance, P.M. Barford, in his book *The Early Slavs* (2001), states that the denars attributed to Mieszko I should be attributed to his grandson, Mieszko II (A.D. 1025-34). He cites an article by the eminent scholar Stanislaw Suchodolski to support this proposition. The article, "Spôr o początki mennictwa w Czechach i w Polsce (Controversy on the beginnings of coinage in Bohemia and Poland)", appeared in the journal *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne* in 1998. I have not had an opportunity to review this article but can direct interested numismatists to an earlier article by Suchodolski that discusses the controversy regarding whether to attribute the denars to Mieszko I or Mieszko II. The article, "Moneta Polska W X/XI Wieku (Polish Coinage in the 10th and 11th Centuries)", appeared in *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne* in 1967. This latter article has a lengthy English language summary that makes it accessible to those of us who do not read Polish. I'd be happy to pass along a copy of the summary to any interested readers.

Finally, the second denar illustrated is described by the article as bearing the image of a bird. It is actually a hand ("Manus Dei" or "Hand of Providence"). It is a not uncommon coin type for the era. It may have been, for instance, struck in imitation of the "Hand of Providence" pennies issued by Aethelred II of England (A.D. 978-1016).

Donald S. Yarab NI # LM129

*(Donald Yarab may be reached at P.O. Box 14487, Cleveland, OH 44114 or email to [dsyarab@yahoo.com](mailto:dsyarab@yahoo.com)).*

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*NI*

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## News, Notes and Comments

Canada has announced that it will begin minting a Palladium Maple Leaf containing one ounce of the precious metal. I have not heard whether there will be any smaller sizes. Canada's decision may give a jump start to Palladium prices, which have been very low lately. In the years in which I have followed this metal, I have seen it go from \$60 to over \$1000, then back down to about \$120, then up to the present levels of \$190-200.

The first country to issue coins with dates for the next year is usually Australia, and this year is no exception. Their coins with the date of 2006 are expected any day now. This applies to both the Kangaroo coinage and the Lunar Animal pieces in silver and gold. Incidentally, 2006 will be the year of the Dog.

Recent cover stories in WORLD COIN NEWS announce two series of coins that will possibly be of wide interest. Poland, as we would have expected, will issue a set of coins honoring its favorite pope, the late John Paul II. One will be gold, two silver and one a copper alloy known as Nordic Gold (which has been used for the 10 Cent, 20 Cent and 50 Cent Euro coins). France will issue four coins, two silver and two gold, which will celebrate AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS; these are commemoratives for the 100th anniversary of the death of Jules Verne.

The winner of the World Coin News "Coin of the Year" contest has been announced as Belarus, selected for its 100 Ruble silver coin honoring the Ballet of Belarus. This same coin also won an award as the most artistic new coin. Belarus also won the Best Crown award for a 20 Rubles silver coin, KM-53, which features swans; it is indeed a very attractive design. The Australian Mint won multiple awards in the categories for Most Historically Significant, Most Innovative Coinage Concept (for a Cook Islands piece) and Most Inspirational. Great Britain was the winner in the Best Contemporary Event Category for a 2 Pounds which commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Discovery of DNA, so the Double Helix will appear now on a very inexpensive coin (KM-1037), which has a ring of nickel-brass around a center of copper-nickel.

To the list of gold coins of the French Overseas Territories, which we first discussed on page 144 of the July issue and then touched upon again in an insert in the August issue, we can now add St. Martin (in the Caribbean), St. Pierre and Miquelon (near Newfoundland) and the Southern and Antarctic Territories. The three coins respectively show a Fish Osprey, a Heron, and an Emperor Penguin with Chick. This brings the list of issuing countries to nine, and that may be all that are planned. No dealer that I have talked to knows of any further issue to come.

A recent occurrence ties in with articles that we will be issuing in upcoming bulletins. The novelist Salman Rushdie, born in India of Moslem parents, has issued a call for Moslems to change their ways and modernize, becoming more "western." You may remember Rushdie from some 15-16 years ago when one of his works angered the infamous Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, so much that he issued a *fatwa* calling for the assassination of Rushdie and all those who had helped him publish his offensive work. This *fatwa* was the most famous of all the *fatawa* (plural) ever issued because it was a brazen "license to kill." Rushdie went into hiding, but his publisher was attacked and wounded.

Locally, we have been delighted with two recent developments. One of the young students who was awarded a free membership for one year in the memory of Jack Lewis attended a recent meeting with his father. It was a genuine pleasure to meet and talk with them. Also, our newest member is a youngster about eight or nine years old. It has been a very long time since we had young persons like this one join the association, and we are delighted with this development. After all, we are talking about the future of NI here.

We close on a heavier note. Twice recently, and just two or three days apart, I had the unpleasant task of sitting down with widows to appraise collections left to them by their husbands, and in each case I had to say that there simply was not much value there. In some cases in the past 20 or 30 years I have been able to give heirs some

good news about inheritances which were worth thousands of dollars, but not on these two recent occasions, both of which were very painful to me. One lady said that her husband had put a lot of money into those coins, but I do not know what “a lot” really signified in this case because the whole collection would barely have reached \$1000. It appeared that her husband had ordered from ads on the TV or in the Sunday supplement magazines of newspapers or from some of the slick-cover magazines. Those places, of course, are not where anyone should go to make his purchases.

One problem for heirs is that there frequently is no paperwork telling what had originally been paid for the merchandise. Of course, some of the collections coming on the market now were put together by collectors who started forty years or more ago, and some of the paperwork has been lost. The heirs could certainly use that paperwork. Failing to receive that from the estate, the heirs need at the very least some record from the collector of what the material might have been worth at a given point in time. I will never forget the heirs who went rushing to a coin shop and sold a complete set of Canadian silver dollars for \$1.00 per coin, including the 1947s and 1948. I have other similar horror stories, but I will spare you details. I wish collectors would realize that they are really betraying themselves by failing to give information about their collections to their heirs. They need to educate their families and give them the names of three dealers they can go to for fair appraisals. I wish NI could give you some help with this. If you think that there is some way we could help, we are open to your suggestions.

Howard L. Ford

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Significance of the Design – A Continuing Series  
**Unusual Symbolism on Recent Silver Coins of Nepal**  
 Elmore Scott NI # LM3



Symbols used in different cultures can take on very different meanings. These two 2003 silver coins of Nepal are a good example of this. One coin shows a hexagram, of the type commonly called a Star of David while the other has a swastika. Nepal is a Hindu kingdom in the Himalayas and the designs have nothing to do with Hitler or Judaism. The coin with

the Swastika is a silver 250 Rupee commemorating the 50th Anniversary. The Swastika is used as an ancient symbol of good luck and well being. The coin with the Star of David is a silver 500 Rupee that celebrates the 50th Anniversary Management Education in Nepal. The coins are dated 2060 in the Vikrama Samvat era, which is 2003AD. Images are not actual size.

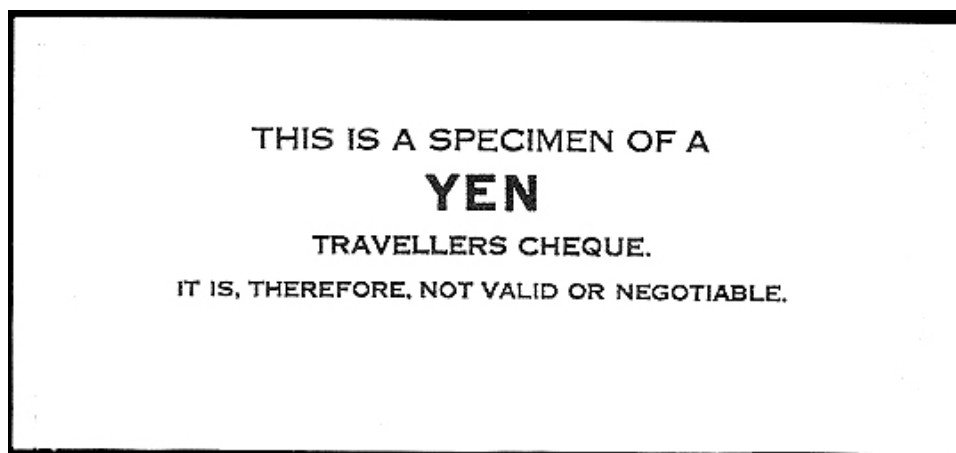
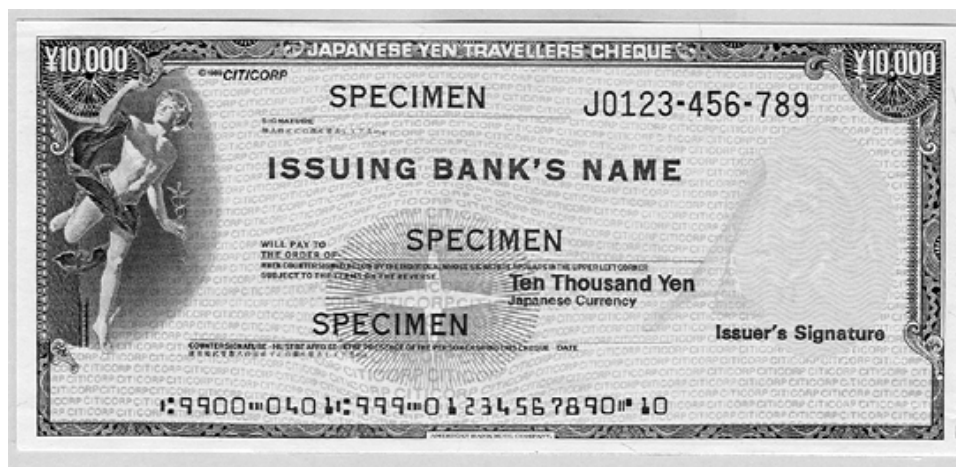
*NI*

## Japanese Specimen Travelers Checks

Roger deWardt Lane NI # 815

About twenty-five years ago, the author, was the Treasurer of a large resort hotel on the beach at Hollywood, Florida. In addition to being an accountant, he was a numismatist. So, when both Citicorp and the Bank of Tokyo, Ltd. sent him Japanese SPECIMEN travelers checks, he retained them as part of his collection. There were four different types in the group.

No. 1: JAPANESE YEN TRAVELLERS CHEQUE ¥10,000 issued by CITICORP, copyright 1980. Numbered JO123-456-789 transit number 9900-0401:999-1234567890-10, stamped SPECIMEN in three places. Printed by the American Bank Note Company, black and green, watermark, size 169mm x 76mm. Reverse: blue-green; legend THIS IS A SPECIMEN OF A YEN TRAVELLERS CHEQUE. IT IS, THEREFORE, NOT VALID OR NEGOTIABLE.



No. 2: BOT YEN TRAVELLERS CHEQUE ¥10,000 issued by THE BANK OF TOKYO, LTD. Numbered 0000-000-00, transit number 020:9900-0015:963-000000-120011, stamped SPECIMEN in three places. Printed by Government Printing Bureau, Tokyo, green and black, watermark, size 169mm x 76mm. Reverse image: Japanese Pagoda.

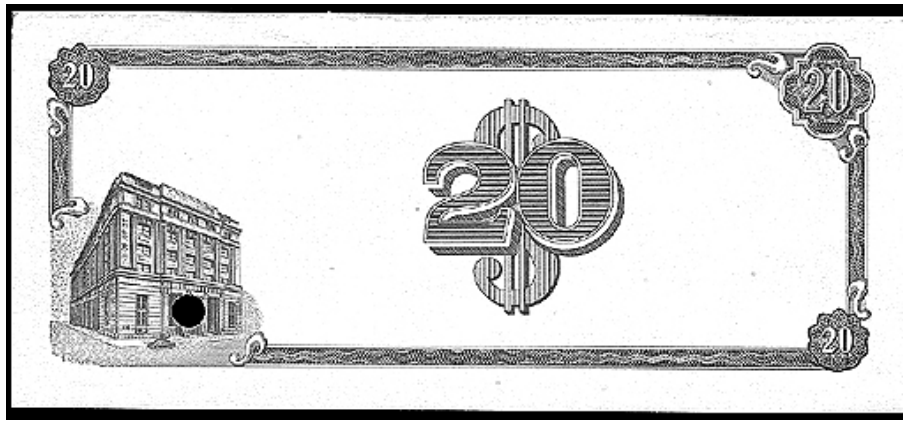


See expanded description of the reverse design at the end of this article.

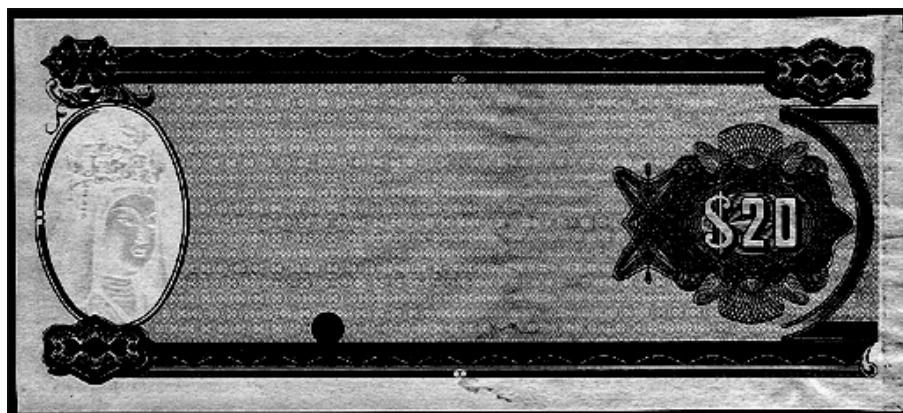
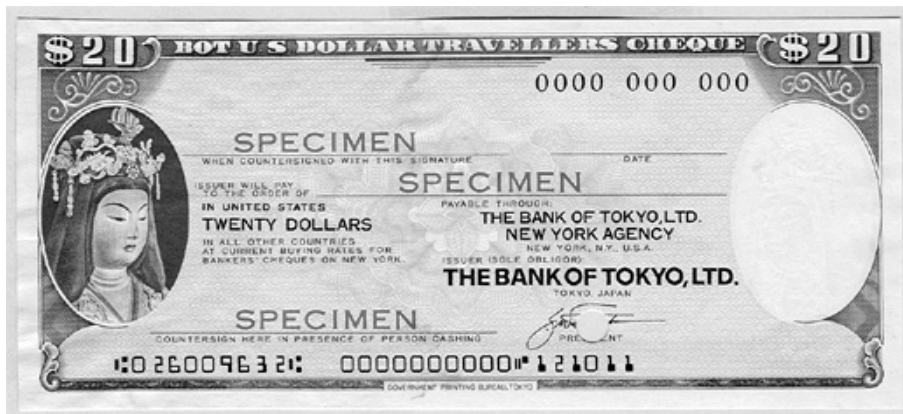
No. 3: BOT U S DOLLAR TRAVELLERS CHEQUE \$20 issued by The Bank of Tokyo, LTD. NEW YORK AGENCY Numbered 0000-000-00, transit number :0 260-093: 0000000000-121011, stamped SPECIMEN in three places. Printed by Government Printing Bureau, Tokyo, green and rose, size 160mm x 71mm. Reverse: green; image of Japanese Bank Building; large 20 over \$ in center.







No. 4: BOT U S DOLLAR TRAVELLERS CHEQUE \$20 issued by The BANK OF TOKYO, LTD. NEW YORK AGENCY. Numbered 0000-000-00, transit number :0 26009632: 0000000000-121011, stamped SPECIMEN in three places. Printed by Government Printing Bureau, Tokyo, tan and black, watermark, size 160mm x 71mm. Reverse: blue and green; image \$20.

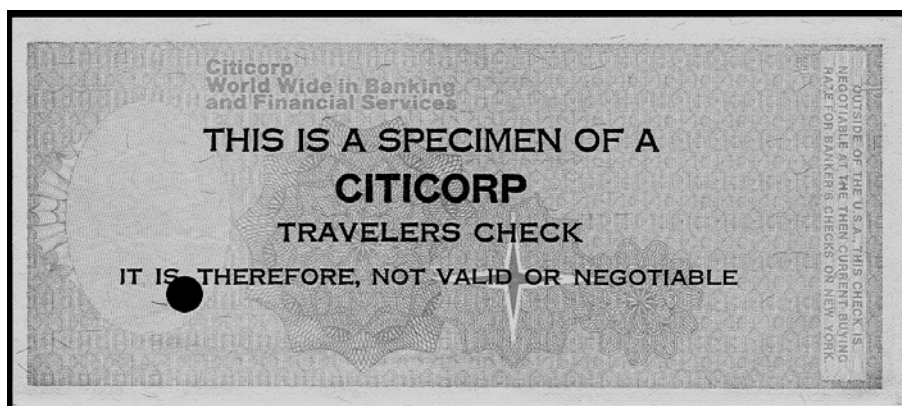
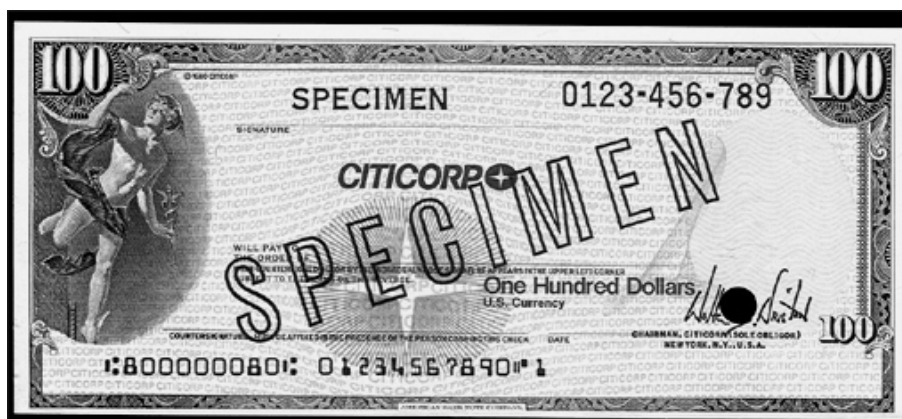


You can see the watermark on the (darkened) reverse image.

No.5: 100 Dollar U.S. Currency, issued by CITICORP+. Numbered 0123-456-789, transit number: 8 00000080-01234567890-1, stamped SPECIMEN in two places.

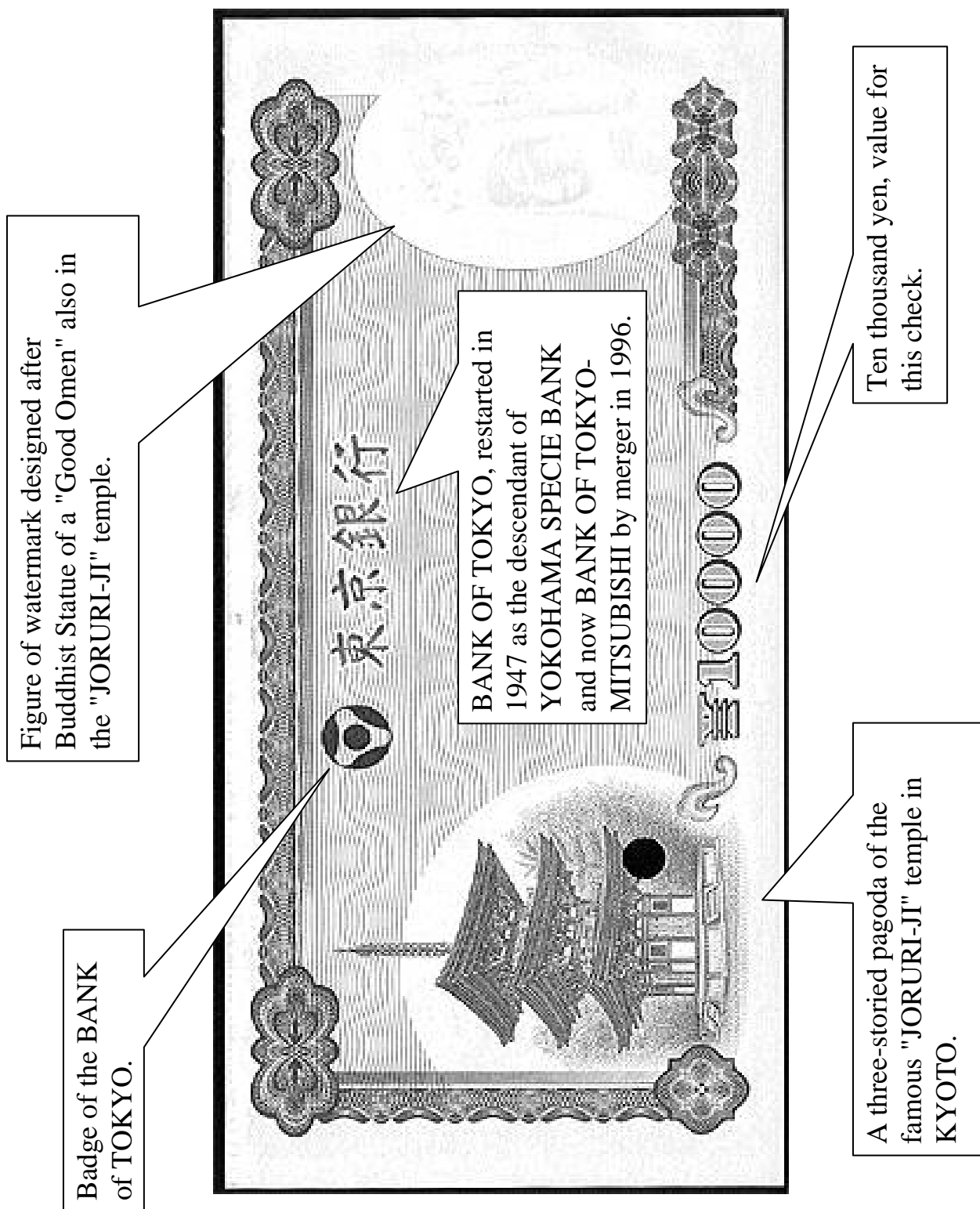
Printed by American Bank Note Company, green and black, watermark head of Mercury, size 160mm x 70mm. Mercury to left. Copyright 1980 Citicorp, upper left; Signature lower right: Walter Wriston CHAIRMAN, CITICORP (SOLE OBLIGOR) NEW YORK, N.Y. U.S.A. Reverse: blue and green; legends Citicorp / World Wide in Banking / and Financial Services; THIS IS A SPECIMEN OF A / CITICORP / TRAVELERS CHECK / IT IS THEREFORE NOT VALID OR NEGOTIABLE; vertical to right OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.A., THIS CHECK IS / NEGOTIABLE AT THE THEN CURRENT BUYING / RATE FOR BANKER'S CHECKS ON NEW YORK.

Note: An image scan of U.S. \$100 Travelers Check shows the watermark as a series of large V's (for void).



The Japanese travelers checks were beginning to be issued for Japanese tourists who were just starting to visit the east coast of the United States. California and Hawaii had for some time been a destination of the tourists from the Far East. With the opening of Disney World in Orlando, Florida, the banks wished to educate resort hotels as to the different types. The author does not remember ever seeing a guest try to cash one of these types as the few Japanese visitors were usually with a convention group. The U.S. \$100 Travelers Check was seen from time to time, presented by foreign visitors.

I wish to thank fellow NI member Hideo Futahashi for reviewing the reverse design of check number 2, his interpretation follows on the next page.



Reverse of Lane No. 2, interpreted by Hideo Futahashi.

*When referencing these checks please cite as Lane No. 1, Lane No. 2, etc. This is the number scheme assigned by the author—ed.*

## **Propaganda, or Coins Tell a Story / Tell a Story With Coins**

**Francis J. Gerner NI # 1085**

The term "propaganda" connotes untruths and lies, but the actual meaning is less villainous. It basically means to spread information.

In psy-ops (psychological warfare operations) the concept was that there were three forms of propaganda: White, Gray and Black. The "white" was the dissemination of truthful statements to the enemy that would contribute to decreasing their morale. The "gray" was partial truths or statements alluding to information or facts that were seemingly possible and verifiable to a degree, leading to a desired conclusion which was not necessarily accurate, factual, or the reality of the situation. The "black" was out and out lies. Coins have been used in all three ways by their authorizing agents/governments.

What I propose is that there is a need for collectors to tell the story of coins and tell the story the coins tell. Propagandize coin collecting. Visit local civic clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, Optimists, etc.), social organizations, retirement communities, schools, or the local library. Provide a program of information (white propaganda). Bring to the attention of friends and acquaintances of the possible fun and information available in their hands.

After authoring an article for NIB ("A Numismatic Trek: Der Schwabenzug", Vol 31, No. 10) I presented it to a local Kiwanis Club. As it contained previously unknown (to the audience) historical facts about the end of the Cold War period, it was well received. A secondary payoff was that several members brought their coins to another meeting I attended. They learned what their coins were, and this made the coins more meaningful to them. The next time they showed the coins to their grandchildren they were able to "show and tell", whereas previously the coins were in some cigar box in the work bench.

In another club program, using American coins, I presented information about the symbolism, subjects, coin facts and/or quirks (e.g., Lincoln can be seen on both sides of the current penny), and history of common coins they all probably have in their pockets, or remember having used them when they were children. Again, new interest was expressed by several attendees regarding coins, and the information they now possess can impress their children and grandchildren.

About 6 months ago I was shown a box of various foreign coins by a friend, and told him what he had and described features as above. As a birthday gift, three months ago, I prepared a small album of 5 pages with a facing page of "facts" generally describing the nation of coinage and something connected with each coin on the opposite page. He is now interested in doing the same with another "old box of old coins." Not a numismatist by a long shot, he is coin "collector" of sorts, a person with more respect for the hobby and one who could suggest it to one of his children/grandchildren, or just tell them stories from those pages.

After leaving the service (15 years in the USAF) I gathered my collection of coins accumulated into an album: *World Coins*. During my service I had made it a point to

collect all the different coins I could that passed through my hands, without purchasing from a store or dealer. Each time I received a coin in my hand I examined it for any feature that was different from others I had. At times I would see a coin in a cash register or see a strange coin in someone else's change and would ask to exchange it. This led to interesting new acquaintances and newly acquired knowledge about the coins I obtained. I learned about the differences in Scottish and English shillings, the Florin, the "facing" rule of the kings/queens on English coins (succeeding monarchs face in opposite directions, except when George VI assumed the throne—guess why), and some of the nicknames given by the public for particular coins.

I had been in England before and after the currency change, passed through Check Point Charlie and had East German coins (picked up coins before and after the unification), learned about the dating on Spanish coins (they are not all the same date easily seen on the coin), and even found coins in my hand that were as old as 70 years still in circulation. New acquaintances, after hearing I collected coins, would even offer to go home and find something that might be of interest to me, or meet me at a later time and give me a coin as a memento of our meeting. Now, 45 years later, I still have memories of meeting someone in a pub, on a train platform, or in a store.

I have shown this album to others who travel and ask that they bring me one coin of every different type they find in their hand as change, no more than that, if they remember. Some do, some don't. Recently, one young traveler (15 years old on a group tour in Australia) is doing just that, according to his last phone call home. He also said he was keeping a set for himself. I informed his parents that I would make an album for him when he returned as a memento of his trip to "down under". Will he keep collecting? Who knows. But he will have something to show the other kids, telling his story of his adventures.

I heard the story of the coins, and the coins told a story, and now I tell my story about the coins. Propaganda, or public relations?

*NI*

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Numismatics International web site.

<http://www.numis.org>

## Katanga Cross Revisited

Herman Blanton NI # LM115

“The Unusual Katanga Cross,” by Joel Anderson, was published in this Bulletin in May 2001. In this related article I show the 5 franc coin issued for “Katanga” in 1961. The Belgian Congo received independence from Belgium in 1960 and became the Republic of Congo. Shortly thereafter the Katanga region of the newly formed republic declared its independence under the name of 'Katanga' (with the support of Belgian mining companies operating in the region). The Republic of Congo was very unstable politically and the United Nations went in and subdued Katanga consolidating it back into the Republic of Congo in 1963. Foreign powers intervening in national politics included the USA and the USSR. The country has had several names since 1960; today it is the “Democratic Republic of the Congo”, though still well known by its previous name of Zaire. The Katanga region was renamed “Shaba,” and then Katanga again in 1997. Still today there is political instability, leading up to national elections called for 2006.

The Katanga cross itself was an unusual form of money, consisting of large, heavy, copper castings, about 8 or 9 inches across and weighing about 2 pounds. For image and further description see the Anderson article mentioned earlier. It had been used as money in the region for perhaps 1000 years and was about as stable of a symbol as could be found in the war torn nation. It is still a symbol of the region’s identity and heritage. I presume these are among the reasons for choosing the Katanga cross for the coin design.

In 1961 Katanga issued its first coins, a copper 1 Franc and 5 Franc for circulation. A gold non-circulating version of the 5 Franc was also issued.



5 Francs 1961 – Actual size 26 mm  
Katanga Cross / Banana tree bearing fruit

*NI*

Significance of the Design – A Continuing Series  
**Coat of Arms of Portugal**  
Howard Ford NI # LM90



Brazil 4000 reis 1813, gold, 25 mm  
Image courtesy Ponterio & Associates

The coat of arms of Portugal, which most of us have seen on Portuguese coins, and many old Brazilian coins, contains five shields, arranged in the form of a cross, each shield with a roundel in the center. The shields represent the five Moorish princes defeated by the Christian army of Alfonso Henriquez at a battle near Ourique in 1139, which insured that Portugal would be Christian and that Alfonso would become the first king of Portugal. The cross and the five roundels recall the crucifixion, with the roundels representing the stigmata, the five wounds of Christ, in whose name Alfonso fought against the Muslims. In 1252 the design expanded. With the marriage of Alfonso III of Portugal to a daughter of the Spanish King of Castile, a large outer shield was placed around the original design; the shield contained seven castles, representing the great fortresses of Castile.



Brazil 960 reis, silver, 1820. Approx. diameter 40mm  
Image courtesy of [www.novamarketing.ch](http://www.novamarketing.ch)

The shields sometimes appear within a circle, which represents the globe, and a world made much less forbidding by the accomplishments of the Portuguese, Prince Henry the Navigator and others. In full color presentations, as in the national flag, the design is as follows: a golden globe within which appears a red outer shield containing seven golden castles surrounding five blue shields with white roundels (John Davenport, *EUROPEAN CROWNS AND TALERS SINCE 1918: Second Edition*, London, 1964, p.128).



Portugal 10 escudos 1928, silver, approx. 29 mm  
Image courtesy [www.ebaystores.com/pacificnorthwestrarecoins](http://www.ebaystores.com/pacificnorthwestrarecoins)

Question, can any of our members tell us the names of the five Moorish princes or what areas of Portugal they controlled before the Battle of Ourique?

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*NI*

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### Coin Quiz Bob Fritsch NI # LM134

Here are some questions about Mexico and Central America:

1. What was unusual about the Mexican 10, 20, and 50 New Peso coins (KM553, 561, 571) of 1993-1995?
2. What countries comprised the Central American Republic?
3. What is the only English-speaking country in Central America?
4. There are three varieties of the very common KM479 1968 Mexico City Olympics (at least Type I is common). What are the differences between them?

Answers found elsewhere in this edition.

*NI*



## Two Roman Coins of Philip I

Howard Ford NI # LM90



The Roman Emperor Philip I, or Philip the Arab, was by all accounts a brutal and ruthless man. He took the throne by plotting against and killing the previous emperor, the youthful Gordian III, a mere teenager. We might wonder why then on the obverse of one of his silver antoniniani the portrait of such a vicious man is linked with a reverse design which shows the gentle goddess Annona (Sear 2453), for the combination almost seems strange enough to qualify for one of our essays on numismatic odd couples.

In truth, it did not much matter what sort of man a Roman emperor was. If he wanted to remain emperor, then he had better pay kind attention to Annona, the goddess of the grain, for every Roman emperor knew that Italy had to get large shipments of grain from the provinces regularly and that the citizens of Rome had to have their bread. Many Roman emperors lived only a short time after becoming emperor; a sure way to decrease the number of years in their reigns was to lose the support of the people, and a hungry population would not give support to the emperor who had failed to get food to them. Therefore, it was imperative that Annona be honored and that the fruits of the Mediterranean harvests arrive in time. Many historians believe that Philip, while serving as praetorian prefect, engineered Gordian's death by diverting a shipment of grain that was needed to feed his troops during their retreat from a disastrous defeat at Misikhe in Persia, thus causing the troops to revolt and kill their young emperor.



On the reverse of another silver antoninianus of Philip I, there is nothing in the design except a goat. This is a coin dated to AD 248. At least, it was minted for a celebration to be held that year. Romans considered that the year 248 marked the 1000th anniversary of the founding of their city. Many festivities filled the calendar that year as the citizens celebrated the birthday of Rome; the goat represents the games and sacrifices that were elements in the huge celebrations. It may be feared that the goat did not survive the occasion. Images are not actual size.



Images courtesy of Jim Shaffer,

<http://ettuantiquities.com>. *Jim will have an article in the January 2006 Bulletin—ed.*

NI

## **Unusual Coins from Vatican City**

### **Elmore Scott NI # LM3**

#### **Vatican City State**

The State of the Vatican City, also known as the Papal State, lies on the right bank of the Tiber River within the boundaries of Rome. It has an area of 109 acres (0.17 square miles) and a population of less than 2000. Vatican City consists of the Vatican, St Peter's and extraterritorial rights to Castel Gandolfo and 13 buildings in Rome. It may be minuscule but its global influence is mighty, for it is the spiritual home of the world's Catholics and the Pope is ranked among the great leaders of the world.

The Papacy had its own coinage for centuries, but these were confined to Rome itself after the unification of Italy in 1860. For almost 60 years relations between the Papacy and the Kingdom of Italy were strained. The problems and intransigence on both sides seemed insurmountable. After seizing power in 1922, Benito Mussolini was determined to settle the matter, and on February 11, 1929, the Lateran Treaty between the Holy See and Italy was signed. Coins were introduced in 1929 conforming to the Italian weights and specifications and consisted of the bronze 5 and 10 centesimi, the nickel 20c, 50c, 1 and 2 lire, the silver 5 and 10 lire and the gold 100 lire. The initial series had the papal arms on the obverse, while the reverse motifs featured an olive branch, Peter and Paul, the Archangel Michael, the Virgin Mary and (on the gold coin) the standing figure of Christ. Vatican City has been referred to as "Money Mecca" as it produces a lot of coins (a new type each year since 1960) and this article presents some of the more interesting and unusual. There are also some recent coins shown that honor Pope John Paul II that were issued by other countries.

#### **Last Set of Lire Denominated Coins**



This nice set of four 2001 coins were the last of the Lire denominated coins issued by the Vatican City, before the Vatican, along with Italy, adopted the new Pan-European 'Euro' currency. This is also the last of the "affordable" Vatican coins. Because of the extremely limited mintage of Euro denominated Vatican coins, along with popularity of Euro coins, the Vatican Euro coins sets bring hundreds of dollars. Unlike previous Vatican issues, the 2001 coins pictured previous Popes. The 100 Lire pictures the beloved Pope John XXIII who reigned from 1958 to 1963, the 200 Lire shows Pope Paul VI who reigned from 1963 to 1978, the bi-metallic 500 Lire coin shows Pope John Paul I who reigned for a little over a month in 1978, while the bi-metallic 1000

Lire shows Pope John Paul II. The arms of Pope John Paul II are on the reverse of the coins. This is a historic set of coins.

### **The Unusual Sede Vacante Coins**

The Sede Vacante, or “Empty Seat”, is the period after one Pope dies and before another Pope is elected. Since the 16th century, the Vatican has struck coins to mark this transitional period. The 1978 coin is shown to the right. The coin has a mintage of only 100,000

pieces. Another Sede Vacante coin was issued less than six weeks later, when Pope John Paul I died 32 days after being elected. One side shows a dove, representing the Holy Spirit. The



legend “Veni Sancte Spiritus”, which translates as “Come Holy Spirit” is a prayer asking for God to give guidance to the College of Cardinals in selecting the new Pope. The other side has the arms of the Camerlengo who was in charge during the transitional period. From the Middle Ages onward, the Popes ruled varying areas of central Italy, known as the Papal States. In 1861, the Kingdom of Sardinia took over the Papal States outside Rome; renamed the Kingdom of Italy, it occupied Rome in 1871 and enacted the Law of Guarantees which guaranteed special status for the Vatican area and provided a generous income for the Pope. Pope Pius XI and his successors adamantly refused to acknowledge these laws and voluntarily “imprisoned” themselves in the Vatican. The impasse lasted until February 11, 1929, and the signing of the Lateran Treaty by which Italy recognized the sovereignty and independence of the new Vatican City state.

### **List of “Sede Vacante” periods from the 19th century.**

- Between Pius VI and Pius VII - August 29, 1799 to March 14, 1800, 197 days
- Between Pius VII and Leo XII - August 20 to September 28, 1823, 39 days
- Between Leo XII and Pius VIII - February 10 to March 31, 1829, 49 days
- Between Pius VIII and Gregory XVI – Dec.1, 1830 to Feb. 2, 1831, 63 days
- Between Gregory XVI and Pius IX - June 1 to June 16, 1846, 15 days
- Between Pius IX and Leo XIII - February 7 to February 20, 1878, 13 days\*
- Between Leo XIII and Pius X - July 20 to August 4, 1903, 15 days\*
- Between Pius X and Benedict XV - August 20 to September 3, 1914, 14 days\*
- Between Benedict XV and Pius XI - January 22 to February 6, 1922, 15 days\*
- Between Pius XI and Pius XII - February 10 to March 2, 1939, 20 days
- Between Pius XII and John XXIII - October 9 to October 28, 1958, 19 days

- Between John XXIII and Paul VI - June 3 to June 21, 1963, 18 days
- Between Paul VI and John Paul I - August 6 to August 26, 1978, 20 days
- Between John Paul I and John Paul II - September 28 to October 16, 1978, 19 days
- Between John Paul II and Benedict XVI - April 2 to April 19, 2005, 17 days

\*Note: No “Sede Vacante” coins issued during interregna following Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X or Benedict XV

### Unusual Dated Vatican City Coin

Pope John Paul II is pictured on this Vatican City silver 500 Lire coin of 1980. The coin is pictured at the right. It was issued during the second year of the Pope’s reign, and is dated “AN II” or year 2, rather than using the 1980 AD date.



This date is located just behind the head. The reverse of the coin carries the Papal arms. The coin is in 0.835 fine silver and has a mintage of 184,000 pieces.

### Unusual Special Coin of the Vatican

Pope John Paul II declared the year 2000 to be a Year of Jubilee. The Year of the Jubilee, or Holy Year, is a special celebration of the Catholic Church that has been celebrated on special occasions since 1300AD. The



celebration includes a special indulgence granted to the Pope for pilgrimages by the faithful. The year starts with the opening of the Holy Door at the Cathedral of St. John Lateran in Rome. This 2000 dated Vatican 2000 Lire Year of Jubilee silver coin shows Pope John Paul II opening the Holy Door on one side. The other side shows three holy figures. The coin contains 16 grams of (0.835 fine) silver and has a mintage of only 70,000 pieces. Holy Years since Vatican City became an independent papal state were in:

- 1933/34 (1-2-5-10 Lire and 100 Lire-gold)
- 1950 (1-2-5-10 Lire and 100 Lire-gold)
- 1975 (1-2-5-10-20-50-100-500 Lire)

- 2000 (2000 Lire)

### **The Life of Pope John Paul II**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire, formerly Belgian Congo) recently released four 2004 dated 25mm copper-nickel 1 Franc coins commemorating the life of Pope John Paul II. The coins feature him becoming a Priest in 1946, a



Cardinal in 1967, and Pope in 1978, and his travels to The Congo and other nations. This very attractive and inexpensive set honoring this powerful Pope who helped bring about the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe is shown above.

### **Color Coin from Liberia Honors Pope**

Liberia recently issued this 2005 dated multi-colored silver plated 5 Dollar coin to commemorate Pope John Paul II's Papal visits to Africa. The 39mm coin features a multi-colored portrait of the Pope standing in front of a map of Africa. His robe is red, his stole is gold, his skin is tan, the map is white and the background is dark blue. The reverse of the coin shows the Liberian Arms, which feature a ship and the legend "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here". One can not fully appreciate this colorful coin in a grayscale image.



### **Liberia Honors the Pope**

Pope John Paul II holding a crucifix is featured on the front of these two attractive 2001 dated coins from Liberia. The reverse features St. Peter's in Rome. The large copper-nickel \$10 coin is 39mm in diameter. The smaller \$20 coin is a silver Proof. It has a mintage of only 500 pieces and was expected to sell out quickly.



## Pope John Paul II Visits Cuba

Cuba issued this large (38 mm) 1 ounce 0.999 fine silver proof 10 Peso coin to commemorate Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in 1998. The coin pictures the Pope in front of the Havana Cathedral and gives the dates of his visit. The reverse has the arms of Cuba. Cuba is the only Communist nation that the



Pope visited that did not collapse. Cuba also issued a copper-nickel 1 Peso coin of the same size with the same obverse design. Though Cuba commemorated the Pope's visit, Fidel Castro was one of the few world leaders who was conspicuously absent from the Pope's funeral.

Note: images are not shown actual size.

Some material and photos courtesy of Joel Anderson: <http://www.joelscoins.com/>

*NI*

## Quiz answers

1. They were circulating bi-metallic silver coins, with a bronze-aluminum ring and sterling core. The 20 and 50 NP coins were discontinued in 1996.
2. Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica.
3. Belize.
4. Type I: 3 top rings in a line; Type II: Center ring is lower than the other two in the top row; Type III: Rings as Type II but snake's tongue is long and curved.

## Counterfeit Ancient Chinese Coins

### Scott Semans NI # LM102

It is hard to overstate the problem. The current market is overrun with fakes of ancient Chinese knife, spade, cash, and related cast bronze objects. Since about 1985 forgers in the PRC have developed new techniques in the service of faking bronze vessels and other antiquities of high value. These techniques are easily applied to coins. Reportedly, dealers will take rare coins to these factories where they are reproduced with the correct metal composition, patination color and type of soil adhesion proper to that dynasty and type. Traditional methods of forgery detection (such as summarized in Jen) are impotent against these fakes, and the problem now extends down to some fairly inexpensive items.

I do not think there is any cause to worry about inexpensive coins, such as ordinary Sung and Ch'ing, or the cheaper reigns of Ming, regular pan-liang, wu-shu, kai-yuan and the like, or lower-value struck coins. These are still abundant in China and are apparently not being faked. There are now a significant number of mainland Chinese buying rare coins, both ancient and modern. Added to the steady demand from Japan, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese, the market for Chinese coins is booming. It is encouraging that the fake problem has not affected homeland demand, and I am hopeful that expertise in detecting these modern forgeries will be developed there. The curators at the Shanghai Museum see coins from excavations as well as suspicious pieces from the marketplace, and seem to know how to tell the difference. Also, *China Numismatics*, from the Chinese Numismatic Society, began running a series on modern fakes about 1996, though usually with no information on how to distinguish them. A number of books have come out in China describing and/or picturing fake numismatic items, but they will not be very useful to the Western reader.

How does a Western collector, with no access to this rare expertise, protect himself from these forgeries? In short, avoid expensive items and attractive, high-grade pieces; know true market values; know your dealer; pay attention to provenance; avoid auctions; and seriously consider NOT collecting Chinese coins at all!

*Avoid expensive coins.* Ancient China is truly an undervalued field. You can find hundreds of types, and tens of thousands of varieties for under \$1, and many pieces from the Chou through T'ang under \$5-10. Even the least expensive knives and spades can be had for under \$30. Until you learn what these coins should look like, and who is selling them, why risk buying fakes by spending more?

*Avoid high-grade, attractive coins.* This is really a tough one, because it is every collector's instinct to buy a pretty piece. And the forgers know it! Virtually all of the modern (ca. 1985+) fakes are created to look like the cream of hoard finds, with breathtakingly even patina in hues of green, blue, and red. Some real hoard material is like this, but more often crusty with obscured characters or with impressions of an adjacent piece cooked into the patina. Non-hoard material is safe: at least partly brown, though often with some color as well. The strokes of the characters are unevenly visible, with patina, adhesions, wear, or simple miscasting creating a broken

look to the writing. Buy a brown coin, a chipped, cracked, or ugly coin and you can be sure you are not getting a fake.

*Know a coin's true value.* This is also tough, because there are no really good, objective price guides, but sometimes the only practical way to spot a fake is by its price: too cheap. There is a mentality among some coin dealers that a really good fake is worth nearly as much as a genuine coin, so they will sell it to you for just a little less than wholesale value. A bad fake, they will discount much more. Many Western buyers will play along with this, aiding deception with self-deception: "Well, he's only asking \$x. If it's real, it's worth \$xxx, but if it's fake, I haven't lost much." Wrong. Why would a seller with access to Chinese markets sell something for less than he could get in Beijing? Not only has the buyer wasted his money, the piece will go into his collection and, eventually, into someone else's collection. Think of the next guy down the line, or of your heirs. Even if there are only a few fakes in the collection, a knowledgeable buyer may lowball everything, which is easier than authenticating everything. The original buyer does not even gain in education because he will not be able to compare it with a real piece and see the difference. The best source of pricing information are the offers of specialist dealers. Frankly I have not spent any time evaluating pricing in the several PRC and Taiwan catalogs; if you have, tell me! Fisher's Ding values are bottom-of-market (1980s) dealer-to-dealer in-China prices, way, way too low, and Jen's values are erratic. It is the more experienced buyer who will be able to spot a fake from its price, not the novice.

*Know your dealer.* It's not just about integrity, but knowledge as well. There are only a few dealers in the West who handle ancient China in depth, and a few more in the Far East who deal by mail-order. One who is both knowledgeable and honest is Gilbert Tan Kuan Yang of Singapore. I'm sure there are others, but either I have not seen enough of their actual merchandise, or they appear to be inactive or don't sell retail, so I won't mention them here. I am not skilled enough to detect the best of the current fakes myself, but I can run a limited amount of material past the one expert in North America who is. I would rather not name the bad eggs, because they come and go so fast. Most of them really don't know whether their coins are good or not, and basically don't care. If you want my opinion on a given seller, I'll give it if I have one. Watch out for phony guarantees: "If you don't like it, you can return it." This seller knows that you don't have the knowledge to spot good fakes, and by the time expertise develops to distinguish them, he will be gone anyway. Look for someone who has specialized in ancient Chinese coins, belonged to relevant numismatic societies for some time, and has a good reputation in the field.

*Avoid auctions.* Auction firms don't take returns once they've paid the consignor, while fixed-price sellers may guarantee authenticity for the lifetime of their business. European auctions may be the safest, because often they handle old-time collections, but it's still best to ask where the material came from. Unfortunately the big international auction known for Asian coins has had fakes in the past. Online "auction" sites are not really auctions in the sense understood by coin collectors. There is nobody authenticating merchandise or seeing that it is properly described, or suffering a loss of reputation if a pattern of bad merchandise emerges, and the managers of these sites are notorious for being unreachable, and failing to act against offenders. In fact, you won't even know a seller's NAME until you pay for your



purchase, if then. Now, what does that tell you about the integrity of the medium? Still, you can protect yourself to a degree. If it's just a few bucks, if it's brown or worn - why not? DO "view seller's other auctions" and search "completed auctions" using characteristic phrases of that seller to gain an even broader picture of his offerings. This is something that requires a bit of experience, but if you detect a sameness of appearance across material from different regions or dynasties, it's a tip-off. If he offers some low-grade modern coins, but all the ancients are "pretty," or mostly modern coins, plus a few expensive ancients, do you think this seller really knows what's good and what isn't? And if "you can return if it you don't like it" is the best guarantee offered, are you sure you want to bid?

A European collector maintains a web page on which he rates the offerings of online auction dealers in Ancient Chinese coins. It is well worth a look.

<http://chinesecoins.lyq.dk/eBaydealers.html>

Provenance is the record of ownership of a given coin, ideally from findspot (if a hoard) through current owner, though in practice it is any information at all you can glean about where your piece has been. My first question to someone offering me ancient Chinese coins is, "What evidence do you have that the piece was outside of China before 1985"? Pieces from old collections are, in my opinion, worth a premium over those without provenance. Provenance can start with you: save your invoices. An invoice from a knowledgeable dealer, or one showing purchase before about 1985 will give potential buyers confidence when it is time to sell your collection. It will also make it easier to get a refund from a reputable seller if your purchase later turns out to be counterfeit.

Something should be said of the useful but limited technique of comparing a suspect coin to a known genuine coin, or a rubbing of same. A coin-to-coin comparison is always a useful exercise, but seldom practical for the collector. The cheap coins of which he may find many were produced from different master cash which varied intentionally or accidentally more than between a fake coin and its original. Earlier or less common coins may be less varied but even catalogs aiming at comprehensiveness (much less a given collection) give only a suggestion that something straying slightly from the others is bad. True, a cast is smaller than an original, but many catalogs are printed (or reprinted) smaller than 100%, and in any case exact sizing was rarely a goal of Chinese minters. Less so was weight control, given the imprecise nature of casting. Weight is a useless concern in forgery detection. The Schjoth catalog, so popular among Western collectors for the cleanness of its images, employs drawings and is thus completely useless for comparisons. I have never seen an expert use "comparison" as a way to judge a potential forgery, but it can be helpful to the novice in providing a general sense of what a given type should look like, and it can help sort out charms bearing the same characters as coins, or the clumsier sorts of what I call traditional (or pre-ca.1985) fakes. But comparison will do no good against the current crop of forgeries.

The aforementioned Gilbert Tan recently traveled to Oslo to view the Schjoth collection and published an article not only identifying the forgeries and fantasies, but classifying them according to how they were made. Although there are better primary

references in the field, David Jen's *Chinese Cash: Identification and Price Guide* brings the Westerner important collector lore from China, including on pp.313-315 a good summary of the techniques for unveiling traditional forgeries. Much of it is hard to appreciate without concrete examples at hand, but it is a fascinating read. To whet your appetite for his full text, here's Jen's outline summary of the classic Chinese skill of forgery detection (some paraphrasing).

### **Methods Used in Making Fake Coins and their Exposure.**

1. Recasting using real coins
2. Mould retouching
3. Trading parts (glue-ons)
4. Face-lifting (recutting new characters)
5. Etching with acid
6. Piecing together
7. Striking with a die punch
8. Retouching
9. Faking patina

### **Six Key Areas in Assessing Cash Coins**

1. Legend
2. Alloy
3. Sound
4. Color
5. Odor
6. Profile, or "shen"

I particularly like Jen's discussion of "shen", translated "profile" in the English sense, perhaps, of a criminal profile. Though my own translation of the concept would run to instinct-intuition-unconscious fruits of experience, the author seeks to describe a skill more abstract than even the arts of creating and detecting criminal coins outlined above, or perhaps a summation of them.

A genuine coin has something about it that cannot be reproduced by forgery. That something is called "shen" by the Chinese. It is the essence of artistry, created through the joint efforts of the brushmaster who wrote the legend and the workers who minted the coins. An artist produces a painting through a moment of inspiration, and then goes on to make copies of it, but to the observer there is the feeling that something was not passed on; that something is "shen." A real coin has a sharper look, the alloy is more compact, the legend natural and full of vigor, and the signs of aging apparent. All these factors come together to form a profile that is inimitable. We observe a coin in its entirety, that is, we look at its profile. If the coin is genuine, the "shen" is sure to be there; a forgery appears dull and lifeless in comparison, an empty mask devoid of "shen."

Jen says nothing about the recent crop of forgeries and the improvements upon classic techniques they display. This is an important omission, but perhaps an indication of how slowly expertise is developing even in China. In criminal

investigation it is said that the bad guys learn how to hide evidence almost as quickly as investigators invent new techniques to uncover it. I have heard that there are now a few knowledgeable high-level dealers in China who take a very hard attitude toward fakes, though they are generally not the ones who deal directly with Western collectors. As dealers learn to purchase from these sources, the quality of coins entering the Western market should gradually improve.

There are two other sorts of things that collectors may at first confuse with numismatic forgeries: the charm (amulet), and the contemporary (circulating) forgery, both being quite collectable. Just about anything with a square hole and some picture or image is a charm, or much less often, a token or medal - but not a coin and not intended to pose as one. Naturally, Emperors adopted as the reign titles placed on their coinage certain lucky phrases, and this phrase on a charm may seem to Westerners as mimicking coins - but no more so than a Lincoln Memorial medal apes a Lincoln penny. Then too, a truly lucky reign (often in retrospect) creates a demand for that Emperor's coinage to be worn as a talisman, and local charm-makers will augment the supply when the originals run low. Schjoth's plates on charms, or any of the works devoted to this topic, will quickly show the reign titles most favored in this way, but most charms are distinct enough from coins in one way or another that they will not confuse a collector of moderate experience. Charms themselves, as private issues, can not be forged *per se*, and some motifs have been copied down through the centuries. Still, a collector may prefer an example from the period in which the design originated or served a particular cultural function in place of a recent homage from Taiwan or Hong Kong, and here one's knowledge of coin metals and casting techniques at various periods comes into play.

Circulating forgeries are a useful addition to a collection. Common (thus easily passed) coins are favored, not the rarities of interest to collectors. Early conservative types such as the pan-liang were forged, but since the Emperors at that time contracted out minting, a circulating forgery is something that will bedevil only an expert on this complex series. Even at the near end of the series, Ch'ing forgeries are quite common, and range from small size, brassy, or crude (as the numerous Vietnamese copies) to mint-like issues discernible only by such as Dr. Werner Burger, whose *Ch'ing Cash until 1735* shows varieties by year and contains useful information and illustrations of fakes. Collecting and unmasking contemporary forgeries is a pleasant and educational exercise. These and charms, both interesting in their own rights, can help the novice learn to spot collector-oriented forgeries employing traditional techniques.

My own education in the new crop of numismatic forgeries has been expensive. A supplier of generally bulk, low price Far Eastern material in Singapore began offering rarer ancient China. From different dynasties, it all had blue-white patina, and he didn't run out. Suspicious, I showed specimens to my then-expert, who truly *is* expert in the traditional methods of faking. He OK'd it and I sold thousands of dollars worth. Then I heard about the PRC fake factories from a collector, also in Singapore, checked with a couple of contacts inside China, and decided the circumstantial evidence warranted a recall. I refunded over \$7000 worth, but by that time the seller was out of business, so I still own it. I still deal in ancient China, but not as actively. Most of my own stock was purchased before the fake production really got under

way, or from a source who checks material through the Shanghai Museum. I have been buying cautiously from PRC sources, and running anything suspicious by my expert friend. What I like to buy are pre-1990s collections, even the old time "missionary" collections, which I used to roll my eyes at because they are always full of old-style fakes. Spotting those less sophisticated forgeries seems like fun now!

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**Many “Viri”  
Christopher Carson NI # 2636**

Probably everyone has heard of the Triumvirates which once ruled Rome, and many a collector of ancient and Papal coins has noticed a legend running III VIR \* A \* A \* A \* F \* F or the like, and most of these again have an idea that it refers to a board of men responsible for coinage; but how many realize the message such coins impart about the Romans themselves? After the expulsion of the Tarquins, the people of Rome seem to have developed a positive horror of giving power to any single individual. Their executive power was vested not in one President or Minister or Magistrate but in the two Consuls jointly. These men were meant to consult with each other to reach a wiser decision than one head could alone, but there was undoubtedly also the thought that one would act as a check on the other if need be. To oversee the production of money, they appointed the *triumviri auro argento aere flando et feriundo*, or “three men to smelt and strike gold, silver, and copper.” To reform their laws, the Romans appointed a panel of ten, the famous Decemviri; an order of fifteen priests, or Quindecimviri, had care of the Sibylline books; and so on ad infinitum. Even Augustus’ consolidation of power in the hands of a single man did not put an end to this habit. Not only did the joint offices in the municipal government of Rome continue, in many cases far longer than the Empire itself, but new groups grew up in the Imperial administration until after not too many years there were even multiple associate Emperors. So, when you see that telltale Roman numeral followed by VIR, remember that it signifies far more than an office, that it reflects a whole way of life.

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Howard Ford, c/o Numismatics International, P.O. Box 570842, Dallas, Texas 75357-0842, or email: fordintl@earthlink.net. Does anyone have information about a Rose counterstamp on Napoleon Bonaparte silver? I have just acquired a 1/2 Franc 1808-W in XF with a very clear and attractive rose stamped on the emperor's neck.

*NI*